

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AGRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02 SP-02
OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-07 CEA-01 AF-10 ARA-10
EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 L-03 H-01 PA-01 ISO-00 /143 W
-----020680 221753Z /45

R 221430Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3736

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FODAG

PASS USDA FOR HATHAWAY

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: AORG, WFC, UN, MX
SUBJECT: WORLD FOOD COUNCIL (WFC) FOURTH SESSION

REF: (A) MEXICO 09875, (B) 11595

1. SUMMARY: FODAG CONSIDERS RESULTS OF INFORMAL MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS REFERRED TO IN REFTTEL A PARA 3 AS PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT AT WFC FOURTH SESSION. MINISTERS PRESENT FROM BOTH DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WERE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR CRITICISM OF HOW COUNCIL WAS OPERATING. RESULTS OF INFORMAL MEETING, IF IMPLEMENTED, COULD RADICALLY CHANGE METHOD OF OPERATION OF COUNCIL AND MAKE IT EXTREAMELY DIFFICULT FOR SOME PERMREPS TO PLAY DISRUPTIVE ROLE THEY DID IN MEXICO AND EARLIER MEETINGS.

2. WFC SECRETARIAT PREPARED DRAFT LETTER FOR TANCO'S SIGNAURE AND RECOMMENDS HE SEND IT TO MEMBER COUNTRIES. TO BEST OF KNOWLEDGE OF FODAG MISSION, TANCO HAS NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER
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OR NOT TO SEND LETTER. TEXT OF DRAFT LETTER FOLLOWS.
DURING COURSE OF WFC MEETING JUST ENDED, I WAS
ABLE TO GET TOGETHER MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL
PLENIPOTENTIARIES TO DISCUSS WAY IN WHICH FUTURE
MEETINGS OF COUNCIL SHOULD PROCEED. OUR DISCUSSIONS
WERE MOTIVATED PARTYL BY FRUSTRATION AT MANNER IN WHICH
A LARGE NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS HAD CONDUCTED THEMSELVES

AT PREPARATORY MEETING, AND INDEED IN MANY CASES AT MINISTERIAL MEETING.

THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT FUTURE OF COUNCIL WAS THREATENED BY INABILITY OF LOW-LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES FROM NUMBER OF COUNTRIES TO FOCUS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES AND TO AVOID TIME-WASTING DISCUSSIONS OF WORDS AND PHRASES WHICH CONTRIBUTED NOTHING TO SUBSTANCE OF COUNCIL'S TASK. MINISTERS, FOR THEIR PART, AGREED THAT COUNCIL HAD AN IMPORTANT TASK TO DISCHARGE, THAT IT HAD A GOOD BEGINNING, AND THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT FUTURE MEETINGS SHOULD AVOID SOME OF PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AT THIS ONE.

ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITE TO ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE WAS AGREED TO BE THAT ALL COUNTRIES, OR IF THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE, BY VERY HIGH-LEVEL PLENIPOTENTIARIES COMING FROM CAPITALS, AND FULLY IN TUNE WITH THEIR MINISTERS' THINKING.

MINISTERS ALSO AGREED ON NUMBER OF THE OTHER STEPS WHICH SHOULD BE TAKEN TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS IN FUTURE. I SET THESE OUT BELOW:

IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR COUNCIL TO PRODUCE DOCUMENT AGREED BY ALL MEMBERS. THERE IS NO REASON WHY DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED RATHER THAN WASTING TIME AND ENERGY ON SEEKING A CONSENSUS, WHICH INEVITABLY IS NOT FULLY SATISFACTORY TO ANYONE.

FUTURE MEETINGS SHOULD PROVIDE MORE TIME FOR MINISTERS TO DISCUSS GENERAL ISSUES. THEY SHOULD MINIMIZE STATEMENTS ON THEIR OWN PROGRAMS.

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THERE WAS PLACE IN MEETING FOR REPORTS BY IBRD, IFAD, AND WFP.

AGENDA FOR MEETING SHOULD BE AS FOLLOWS:

- GENERAL REVIEW OF WORLD FOOD SITUATION AND PROBLEMS;
- EXAMINATION OF TWO OR THREE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES;
- POSSIBLY ONE OR TWO CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESSFUL FOOD DEVELOPMENT IN PARTICULAR REGIONS OR COUNTRIES.

DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT REPEAT MATTERS DISCUSSED AT PREVIOUS MEETING. THIS DOES NOT, OF COURSE, EXCLUDE TAKING UP OF SUBJECT FOR SECOND TIME IF THERE ARE IMPORTANT NEW PROPOSALS FOR MINISTERS TO CONSIDER.

MEETING SHOULD NO LONGER THAN THREE DAYS, PERHAPS WITH FIELD TRIP FOR MINISTERS IN MIDDLE OF PERIOD WHILE WORKING GROUP HAMMERS OUT DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION TO THEM.

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ONLY ITEM ON WHICH MINISTERS DID NOT REACH FULL
AGREEMENT IN THESE DISCUSSIONS WAS QUESTION OF PREPARATORY
MEETING. TWO ALTERNATIVES WERE CANVASSED. ONE WAS THAT
THERE SHOULD BE NO PREPARATORY MEETING AT ALL. OTHER WAS THAT
PREPARATORY MEETING SHOULD BE HELD, BUT ONLY AS MEANS FOR
BUREAU AND SECRETARIAT TO BRIEF MINISTERS' STAFFS ON
ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED, SO MINISTERS COULD PREPARE MINDS
TO DEAL WITH THEM; IT SHOULD NOT LOOK FOR AGREED WORDS TO
BE SUBMITTED TO MINISTERS AS WE HAVE DONE IN PAST. I WOULD
BE INTERESTED IN YOUR CONSIDERED VIEWS ON THIS QUESTION BEFORE
BUREAU A FINAL DECISION ON IT.
MINISTERS PRESENT AT DISCUSSION GAVE A MANDATE TO PRESIDENT
AND VICE-PRESIDENT TO ENFORCE THESE CONCLUSIONS IN FUTURE
MEETINGS AND IN REMAINDER TO FOURTH MEETING.
ENFORCEMENT OF THIS MANDATE WAS IN FACT LARGELY RESPONSIBLE
FOR SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF FOURTH SESSION.
MINISTERS ALSO AGREED THAT BUREAU SHOULD CONTINUE TO
TRAVEL AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO CONSULT GOVERNMENTS DURING YEAR
BOTH TO FOLLOW UP ON RESOLUTIONS OF FOURTH SESSION AND TO
PREPARE FOR FIFTH SESSION. END TEXT.

3. FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN FINANCIAL TIMES OF JUNE 20,
WITH CAPTION QTE CALL TO SCRAP FOOD COUNCIL END QTE. BEGIN
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TEXT. MEXICO CITY, JUNE 19. VENEZUELA TO CALL ON UNITED
NATIONS TO ABOLISH WFC, UNLESS ITS METHODS OF OPERATIONS
ARE CHANGED.
WARNING WAS GIVEN PERSONALLY TO MEMBERS OF 36-NATION
COUNCIL BY VENEZUELAN AGRICULTURE MINISTER, GUSTAVO
PINTO COHEN, DURING MEETING HERE LAST WEEK, REPORTS
REUTER.

COUNCIL MEETING ENDED WITH A "MEXICO DECLARATION" BUT THERE WAS WIDESPREAD DISSATISFACTION AMONG DELEGATES AT AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT DRAFTING THIS DOCUMENT RATHER THAN DISCUSSING CONCRETE PROBLEMS AND PLANS TO SOLVE THEM. MR. COHEN CITED AS EXAMPLE OF COUNCIL'S FAILURE THE FACT THAT NUMBER OF HUNGRY PEOPLE IN WORLD HAD ACTUALLY RISEN FROM 400M TO 450M DURING COUNCIL'S FOUR YEARS OF EXISTANCE. END TEXT. THIS ARTICEL ACCURATELY REFLECTS MOOD OF MINISTERS AND REINFORCES POINTS CITED IN DRAFT LETTER REFERRED TO IN PARAGRAPH 2 ABOVE.

4. FODAG BELEIVES STRONGLY THAT LETTER SUCH AS PARA 2 ABOVE MUST GO OUT FROM TANCO TO MEMBER COUNTRIES OF WFC IF THERE IS TO BE SUCCESSFUL CHANGE IN OPERATING PROCEDURES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PREPCOM. IT IS NECESSARY TO LAY OUT GUIDLINES CLEARLY AND FORCEFULL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ROME G-77 PERMREPS WILL TAKE RESULTS OF INFORMAL MEETING OF MINISTERS AS SLAP AT THEM. INDEED, THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT IT IS. IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT, AT VERY LEAST, THEY WOULD TRY TO ALTER PROCEDURES OR GUIDLINES FOR PREPARATORY MEETING. (NOTE THAT THIRD PARAGRAPH FROM END OF DRAFT LETTER, WHICH DEALS WITH PREPARATORY MEETING, STATES, IN PART, THAT PREPARATORY MEETING SHOULD BE HELD, BUT ONLY AS MEANS FOR BUREAU AND SECRETARIAT TO BRIEF MINISTERS' STAFFS ON ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED. THIS COULD BE TAKEN TO EXCLUDE PERMREPS.) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FODAG, THEREFORE, SUGGESTS WASHINGTON CONSIDER:

A. MAKING REPRESENTATION TO TANCO AND WFC SECRETARIAT STRONGLY SUPPORTING GUIDLINES SUGGESTED BY INFORMAL MEETING OF MINISTERS.

B. URGING THATT GUIDLINES BE FORMALLY CICRCULATED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO MEMBER GOVERNMENTS AND OBSERVERS.

C. GIVING CONSIDERATION TO PRESS COVERAGE AT FIFTH COUNCIL SESSION, THOUGH IT DOES NOT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. DURING FOURTH SESSION, PRESS HAD ACCESS TO ALL MEETINGS. IF MINISTERS ARE TO HAVE TYPE OF DISCUSSION ENVISIONED IN GUIDLINES, CLOSED MEETING SEEMS DESIRABLE. POSSIBLY OPENING AND CLOSING SESSIONS COULD BE OPEN TO PRESS.

D. AS GUIDLINES SUGGESTED BY MINISTERS WOULD GREATLY LIMIT AGENDA, SUBMITTING TWO OR THREE ISSUES WASHINGTON WOULD LIKE TO SEE DISCUSSED AT WFC FIFTH SESSION IN ORDER TO OBTAIN SUPPORT FROM SECRETARIAT AND OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL. CERTAINLY NOT ALL IDEAS OR SUGGESTIONS CONTAINED IN MEXICO DECLARATION (REFTEL B) CAN BE EXAMINED IF GUIDLINES LAID DOWN BY MINISTERS ARE TO BE COMPILED WITH GARDNER

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